

Dispersed Camping

If your idea of camping is literally off the beaten path, most of the Ottawa National Forest, outside of the Sylvania Wilderness, is open for dispersed camping with no permits or reservations needed. Campers should be prepared for remote and isolated conditions, to pack in necessary supplies and water, and pack out all trash. No waste disposal facilities or potable water are available in the general forested area. Please follow Leave No Trace Principles to make sure no evidence of your visit remains.

- Use of the current Forest Visitor map is advised. These maps are sold at each Forest Office or may be downloaded to a device <https://www.fs.usda.gov/visit/maps>
- Campers are responsible for knowing when and where they can ride or drive motor vehicles on Forest System roads and trails. Be sure to obtain a current copy of the Ottawa Motor Vehicle Use Map, before you head out. Download it from <https://www.fs.usda.gov/r09/ottawa/maps-guides>
- You may not construct any “improvements” at your camp, including trenches, or cut live trees. Disperse all signs of a campfire if you had one.
- Camping is limited to 16 consecutive days. After 16 days, camp and equipment must be either removed from National Forest System land; or moved to another location at least five miles away for an additional stay not to exceed 16 days.

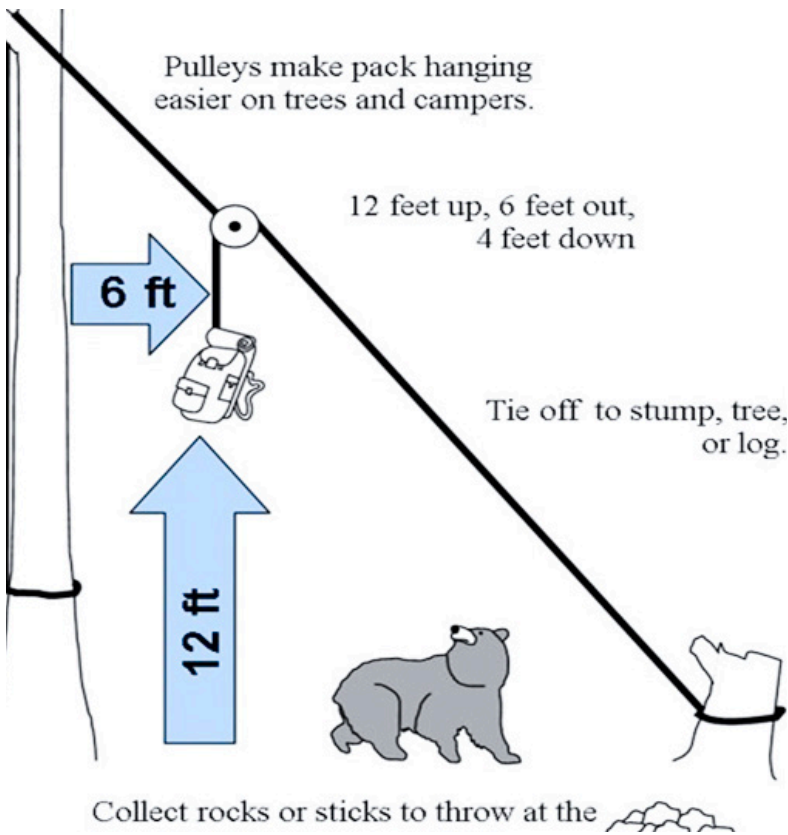


Campfires may be restricted when conditions are dry, so pack a stove. Never leave campfires unattended and ensure your fire is dead out before leaving.

Bear Awareness

The following tips may help you minimize the possibility of negative encounters with black bears:

- Always keep a clean camp.
- Keep sleeping areas free of food and odors.
- Do not sleep in clothes that were worn while cleaning or cooking fish or game.
- Store food, garbage, pet food, and scented items in bear proof containers or hung at least 12 feet from the ground and 6 feet out from a limb or trunk.



Questions? Call our offices or visit our [webpage](#).

Ottawa National Forest
Headquarters &
Bessemer Ranger District
Office
E6248 US 2
Ironwood, MI 49938
(906) 932-1330

Ottawa Visitor Center
E23979 US 2 East
Watersmeet, MI 49969
(906) 358-4724

Hours vary by season

Watersmeet / Iron
River Ranger District
E23979 US 2 East
Watersmeet, MI
49969
(906) 358-4551

Kenton Ranger District
4810 East M-28
Kenton, MI 49967
(906) 852-3500

Ontonagon Ranger
District
1209 Rockland Road
Rockland, MI 49953
(906) 884-2085



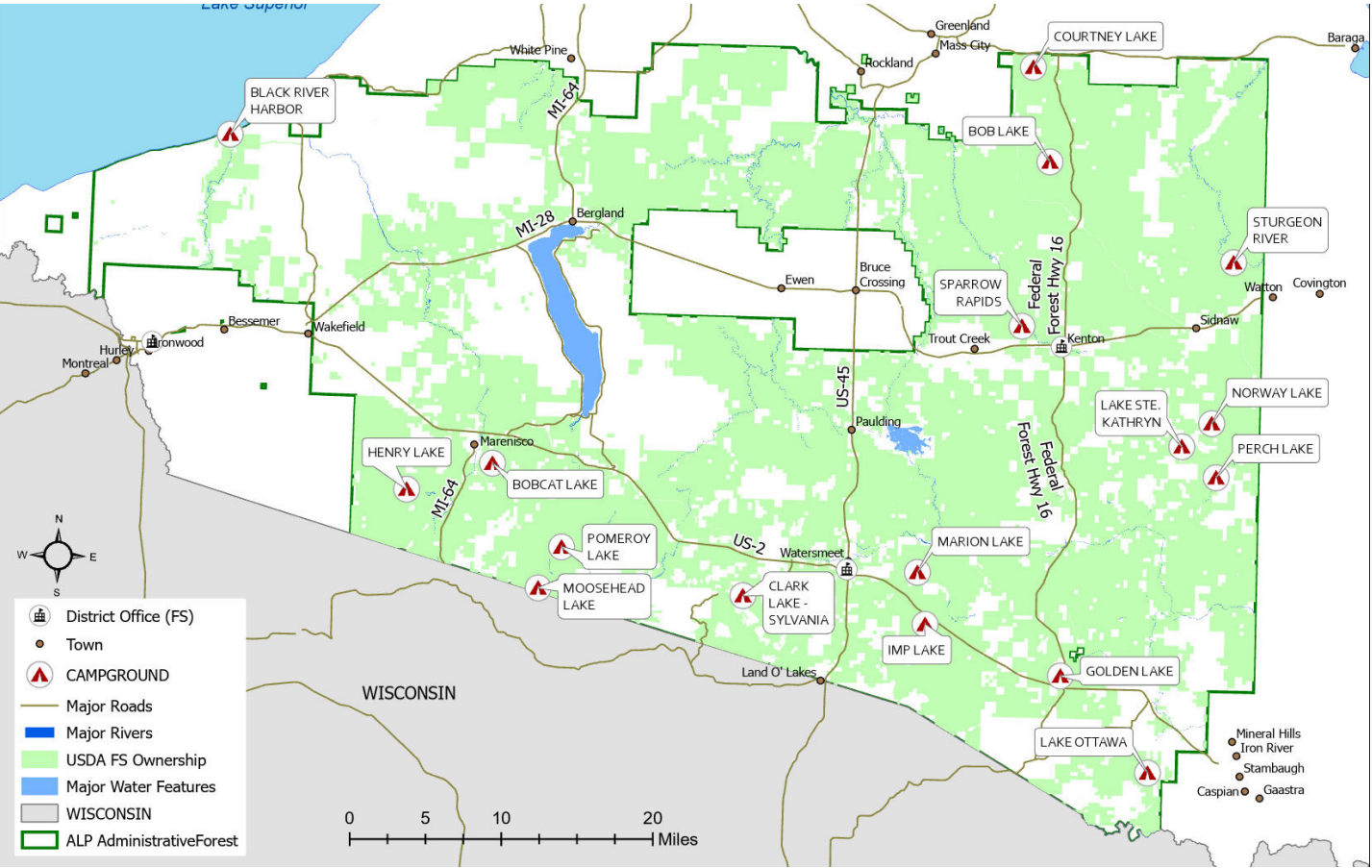
Forest Service
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Ottawa National Forest | July 2025

Camping

The Ottawa National Forest provides a variety of camping opportunities, including campground camping, wilderness camping, and dispersed camping.

Developed Campgrounds



Plan ahead and research your destination on the forest [webpage](#) before traveling. In the winter, many of the campgrounds are inaccessible because of unplowed roads, and toilet facilities may be locked or unavailable.

Developed campgrounds can accommodate tents and RVs. They have vault toilets and garbage receptacles; some have potable water, hiking trails, fishing piers, boat launches, picnic areas, beaches, and electricity. Each campsite has a fire ring and picnic table.

Interagency Senior and Interagency Access Passes are honored with a 50% discount on camping fees. All Interagency passes are honored with a 100% discount on day use and boat launch fees.

At most sites camping is on a first-come, first-served basis. (See Table) Self-service pay stations are located at the campground entrance and are available 24-hours per day.

You must occupy the site the first night. Camping in a developed recreation site is limited to 14 days, unless otherwise posted.

Reservations can only be made by visiting www.recreation.gov, or by calling 1-877-444-6777.



Developed Campgrounds-Fee & Site Guide

Ranger District	Campground	Dump Station	Reservations	Electric Hook-Up	# Single Sites	# Group Sites	Beach, Picnic, Boat Launch, Rental Pavilion, Trails	Single Site Fees	Group Site Fees	Winter Status
Bessemer	Bobcat Lake				11		BPL	\$22		Open
	Henry Lake**				7		L	\$22		Open
	Moosehead Lake				8		L	\$13		Open
	Pomeroy Lake **				11		L	\$22		Open
	Black River Harbor **		+		39		BPLRT	\$22		Closed
Iron River	Lake Ottawa **	+	+		32		BPLRT	\$22		Closed
Kenton	Perch Lake **		+		20		L	\$22		Open
	Lake St. Kathryn **				24		LT	\$22		Open
	Norway Lake **				27		BPL	\$22		Closed
	Sparrow Rapids				6			\$16		Open
	Sturgeon River **				8			\$16		Open
Ontonagon	Courtney Lake				21		BPLT	\$22		Closed
	Bob Lake				17		BPLT	\$22		Open
Watersmeet	Clark Lake	+	+	+	48		BPLRT	\$22 / \$26		Loop 1 Open
	Marion Lake		+		37	1	BPL	\$22	\$100	Loop 2 Open
	Imp Lake				21		PLT	\$22		Loop 2 Open
	Golden Lake				22		L	\$16		Closed
	Sylvania Back Country Sites		+		50			\$15		Open
** These campgrounds are open to OHV. OHV's must stay on the roadway or camping spur.										

Electric: Clark Lake Campground offers hook-up at campsites 15, 20, 21, 22, 27, 33, 45, 46, and 47. These campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis for up to 3 days, if not previously reserved. These sites are \$26/night.

Campsites: There is an 8-person maximum at each campsite. You are allowed 2 vehicles and one RV or camping trailer and two tents per campsite, or 2 vehicles and three tents per campsite.

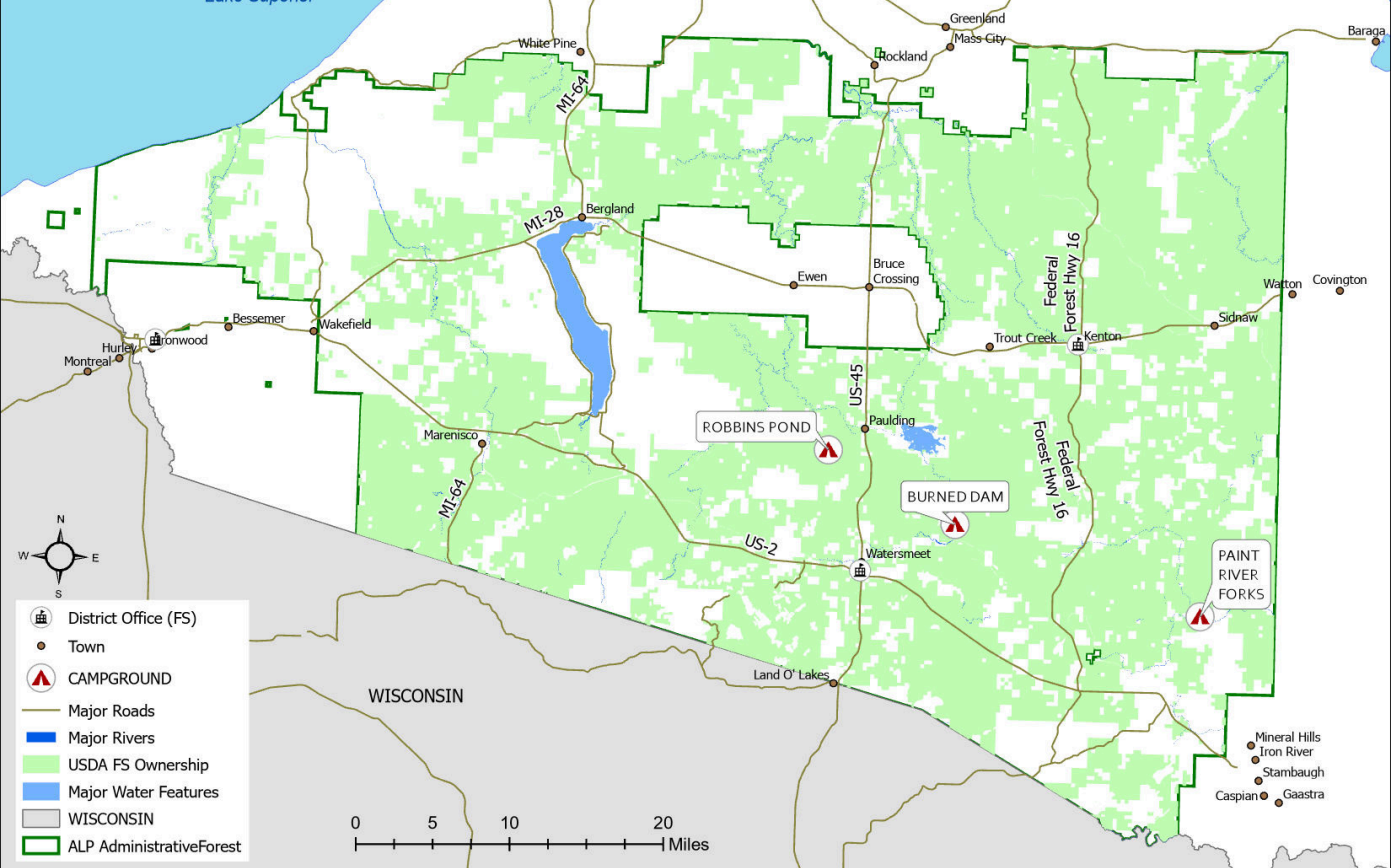
Equestrian Camping: Courtney Lake has 6 sites designed for equestrian use. Sites 1-6 are equipped with either corrals or highlines. There are 3 hitching posts located throughout the campground and a centrally located mounting block.

Marion Lake Group site: This site is suitable for multiple tents/RVs. This site must be reserved through www.recreation.gov, or by calling 1-877-444-6777.

Sylvania Backcountry Sites: A maximum of six people per campsite is allowed. A fire ring and a wilderness latrine are provided at each site. Sites can be reached by water or by trails. Tent camping only.

Fees: Fees are collected when services are provided. During the early spring and late fall, when no services are provided, fees are not charged.

Rustic Campgrounds



Ranger District	Campground Name	Number of Sites	Winter Status
Iron River	Paint River Forks **	4	Open
Watersmeet	Burned Dam	5	Open
	Robbins Pond	3	Open
** These campgrounds are open to OHV. OHV's must stay on the roadway or camping spur.			

Rustic campgrounds have only 1-7 campsites and there is no charge for camping, as there is no water or garbage facilities available. Facilities include outhouses, tables, and fire rings. Sites are generally for tents, but some will accommodate a small RV or camping trailer.

- Maximum group size of 8 per campsite. You are allowed 2 vehicles and one RV or camping trailer and two tents per campsite, or 2 vehicles and three tents per campsite.
- Only use the facilities that are provided for fires, tents, and waste. Do not make additional fire rings, tent pads, trenches, or cat holes.
- You will need to pack out your garbage.

Campground contact information:

Sites operated by concessionaire - (All except for Moosehead Campground & Sylvania Back Country)	All other sites
Camp Host, LLC. (906) 661-8870	Ottawa Visitor Center (906) 358-4724